

I'd like to lodge a formal complaint about the way the public airwaves are being used.

Freedom of speech is an essential part of our democracy, but responsibility is an essential part of free speech, especially during an election period.

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. Sinclair's efforts, in effect, use the public's nickel to fund anti-Kerry propaganda. In the spirit of fairness, they should either a) cease the "requirement" or b) air a pro-Kerry or anti-Bush documentary immediately after.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.